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ABSTRACT

Current educational writing and reporting suggests a need for making reading a more vital experience for the student. One of the ways being tried in the Rye Public Schools (New York) is an integrated, guided, out-of-class reading program that is keyed to the inquiry curriculum. Starting in the third grade, each inquiry unit has specially selected books that provide discovery and adventure for the topic under study. Many of the books are paperbacks consisting of biographies, stories based on historical events, and scientific discoveries. Teachers incorporate sets of books that blend into the inquiry topic, and study guides help students use their out-of-school reading time more effectively. Performance objectives include skills for locating information, drawing inferences, and organizing data into a meaningful report. Through paired teaming, cooperative teachers have flexibility in working with students having a wide range of reading ability. Since the teachers cover the same unit or topic in the same block of time, a student is able to move from one level of skill instruction to another whenever his or her needs are better met. Teachers differentiate instruction on the basis of a student's readiness to follow the trend of a discussion and contribute relevant information. By integrating out-of-class related reading into an inquiry unit, teachers have the means for introducing students to a variety of literary experiences. (HOD)

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Note: Members of the Osborn School staff are making plans to introduce the "Safety Net" concept for developing out-of-class reading habits at the N.Y.S. Reading Conference Nov. 3-5, 1982.

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Providing a "Safety Net" for Students Lacking a Reading Habit.

Basic textbooks and workbooks continue to dominate reading instruction in the elementary grades. Drill activities put a special premium on calling words correctly or getting the right answer. It is true that reading scores are beginning to improve - especially at the primary levels, but comprehension skills and sustained reading habits remain a problem. For far too many students, reading is still a classroom exercise.

Our library and classroom book collections should be more helpful in developing stronger reading habits. Although some students gravitate toward the library and seek out books, they are definitely in the minority. Surveys of elementary libraries reveal most books occupy space on a shelf. Our young readers routinely select and return books without adult follow-up. This is largely a logistic

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problem for the teacher with many students and the prospects of an endless number of book reports. However, book exchanges are usually an adult expectation rather than a meaningful experience for the reader. We accept the fact that reading habits have changed and students more than ever are separating reading from the world outside of school.

There seems to be a great deal of current educational writing and reporting suggesting a need for making reading a more vital experience for the learner. One of the ways being tried in the Rye Schools is an integrated, guided, out-of-class reading program that is keyed to the inquiry curriculum. Starting in the third grade, each inquiry unit has specially selected books that provide discovery and adventure for the topic under study. These books become part of the common reading experiences for students who are encouraged to share their reactions in various kinds of class activities. Many of those books are paperbacks consisting of biographies, stories based on historical events, and science discoveries.

The motivation to read stems from the excitement of discovery through an inquiry topic that covers several weeks of study. We avoid having students read artificial, colorless stories that skip around without a cohesive theme. We find comprehension skills do improve when the student is able to stay with a plot or an idea long enough to develop an interest and desire to pursue it. The need to summarize, draw conclusions, or generalize from an inquiry experience makes reading much more than saying words correctly or getting the right answer.

Some students do benefit from browsing in a library, but we find that out-of-class reading is best nurtured when book selection is not a chance happening. Our teachers incorporate sets of books that blend into the inquiry topic. Study guides are developed to help students use their out-of-sclool reading time more effectively. Important here is the avoidance of questions or problems that require exact answers. For example, the students after reading "The Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk," were asked to put themselves in the place of a

news reporter and describe to their readers what really happened on the day of the first flight. Skills for locating information, drawing inferences, and organizing data into a meaningful report are included as the unit's performance objectives.

Our classroom book sets are large enough to permit each member of the class or subgroup to have a copy of the same book. In this setting students are trained to listen and take notes, as well as identify, and apply relevant facts when taking a position on an issue. The teacher has the means to discern faulty thinking or the confusion associated with figurative and literal meanings.

Through paired teaming, cooperative teachers have flexibility in working with students having a wide range of reading ability. Advanced students are able to assume responsibility and gain from individual projects. Students working on a basic level get more structure and direction. Paired teaming makes it possible for us to change students from one group to another whenever there is a need for more challenge or more time. Since the teachers in paired teaming cover the same unit or topic in the same block of time,

a student is able to move from one level of skill instruction to another whenever his/her needs are better met.

Important in the subgroups are the class discussions that evolve from the students' common reading. Teachers differentiate instruction on the basis of a student's readiness to follow the trend of a discussion and contribute relevant information. Those lacking in a reading habit are not allowed to fall through the "cracks". By integrating out-of-class related reading into an inquiry unit, we have the means for introducing students to a variety of literature experiences. With the inquiry unit as the motivation, the learner has the interest and purpose for developing and sustaining a reading habit.

Paired teaming has replaced the traditional reading circle. Our team subgroups are flexible as there are frequent movements of students from one teaching center to another. The focus in reading is on getting meaning rather than having precise answers. Inquiry concepts are put to work through the student's written or class dictated journals. The emphasis is on students learning to depend on themselves and devise their own reading strategies, and, if necessary, guess or

skip words they don't know. We sense a reading habit begins when the learner first experiences personal power over print.

The following list of book titles currently supports our curriculum. This list is for illustrative purposes and should not be construed as anything more than tentative. Our teachers are continually on the search for books with story plots that help to provide background and sustain interest in the inquiry topic. For many students this is a first experience in reading a book from cover to cover, which we find is an essential first step in making reading an integral part of the world outside of school.

INQUIRY UNIT	AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER
Third Grade			
1. The Natural Environment	Bulla	Squanto-Friend of the Pilgrims	Scholastic
	Payne	Meet the North American Indians	Random House
	Bleeker	Delaware Indians	Morrow
2. Maps, Globes & Land Forms	Goetz	Deserts	Morrow
	Goetz	Valleys	Morrow
	Goetz	Lakes	Morrow
	Goetz	Rivers	Morrow
3. The Earth's Environment	Branley	Man in Space to the Moon	Crowell
4. Man's Influence on the Environment	Breiter	Pollution	Raintree
5. Our Local Environment	Wolfe	Let's Go To City Hall	Putman
	Graves	Fourth of July	Garrard
6. American Heroes	Neilbruner	Meet George Washington	Random House
	deKay	Meet Christopher Columbus	Random House
	Colver	Abramham Lincoln(Discovery Book)	Dell
Fourth Grade			
1. Light and Sound		Helen Keller	Scholastic
		Helen Keller's Teacher	Scholastic
2. Machines, Power & Flight	Sobol	Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk	Scholastic
	Reynolds	The Wright Brothers	Random House
	Collins	Charles Lindbergh	Garrard
	Parlin	Amelia Earhardt	Garrard
	Corbett	What Makes an Airplane Fly?	Atlantic
		Paper Airplane Book	Scholastic
3. Metropolitan America	Barker	From Settlement to City	Messner
	Rinkoff	Member of the Gang	Scholastic
4. Simple Societies & Survival	Barry	Men, Moss & Reindeer	Coward-McCann
		Iceberg Hermit	Scholastic
5. The Prehistoric World	Clymer	Search For a Living Fossil	Scholastic
		Tyrannosaurus Rex	Scholastic
6. Exploration and Discovery of America	Gross	Book about Christopher Columbus	Scholastic
	Syne	Magelian(First Around the World)	Morrow
7. Digestion and Nutrition	Asimov	How Did We Find Out About Vitamins?	Walker & Co.

INQUIRY UNIT	AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER
Fifth Grade			
1. Colonization of America	Vinton	Boy on the Mayflower	Scholastic
	Lawson	Mr. Revere and I	Dell
2. Pioneering	Wilder	Little House On The Prairie	Scholastic
		Daniel Boone	Scholastic
3. Agricultural America	Moore	Story of George Washington Carver	Scholastic
	Shotwell	Roosevelt Grady	Dell
4. Industrial America	Montgomery	Henry Ford: Automotive Pioneer	Gerrard
	Hays	Eli Whitney and the Machine Age	Watts
5. Political America	Sterling	Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman	Scholastic
	Clark	Freedom Crossing	Scholastic
	Bakeless	Spies of the Revolution	Scholastic
6. Microorganisms	Archer, J.	Epidemic! The Story of Disease Detectives	Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich
	Tully	Dread Diseases	Watts
	Asimov	How Did We Find Out About Germs	Walker & Co.
7. Human Skeletal and Muscular System	Weart	The Story of Your Bones	Coward
	Ravielli	Wonders of the Human Body	Scholastic

INQUIRY UNIT	AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER
Sixth Grade			
1. Early River Cultures	Goode, R.	People of the First City	MacMillan
	Goode, R.	People of the Ice Age	MacMillan
	Ronen, A.	Digging Up The Past	Learner Pub.
	Asimov, X.	How Did We Find Out About Our Human Roots	Walker & Co.
		Nefertiti, The Mystery Queen	Raintree
	Reif	Secrets of Tut's Tomb and the Pyramids	Raintree
2. The Circulatory System	Limburg	The Story of Your Heart	Coward
	Silverstein	Circulatory System The River Within	Prentice Hall
3. Ancient Greece and Rome	Carrol	Greek Slave Boy	Scholastic
	Winterfield	Detectives in Togas	Harcourt Brace
4. The Middle Ages	Pyle H.	Otto of the Silver Hand	Scribner
	DeAngelli	The Door In the Wall (Medieval London)	Doubleday
	Unstead	Living In A Midieval Village	Addison-Wesley
	Unstead	Living In A Medieval City	Addison-Wesley
5. Electricity and Electronics	Cousins	The Story of Thomas Edison (A Landmark Book)	Random House
6. The Universe and Space	Walters	Destination Mars	Merrimack Book Services
	Walters	Expedition to Venus	Merrimack Book Service
7. Government Controlled	Hautzig	The Endless Steppe	Scholastic
	Snyder	The First Book of the Soviet Union	Watts
8. The Earth's Elements	Fodor	What Does a Geologist Do?	Dodd

The above sets of classroom books do not replace the library. However, they do expose the student to books that might otherwise be passed over. With successful guided independent reading, the desire to continue on in a subject may cause the library to take on new meaning--especially for those lacking a reading habit.

Starting in the third grade, time for formal reading instruction is reduced, while time for inquiry is extended to a two-hour daily block. Instructional planning begins with concepts that provide structure for an inquiry unit. Each concept has three to five performance objectives that specify what the student is expected to do or achieve. Through common reading sources and class activities, the learner is helped to organize and record what is important in each day's work. In this way, new vocabulary and concepts are integrated through oral and written summaries, generalizations, and conclusions. Such activity not only leads to the improvement of comprehension skills, but becomes the basis for establishing an early reading habit.

A "safety net" concept can help to keep out-of-class reading from being left to chance. Students begin perceiving reading as a life pursuit going much beyond a classroom exercise. We have found that an inquiry setting does provide motivation for cultivating and sustaining a reading habit. When students are able to share and discuss their common out-of-class reading experiences, we have the means for making reading a vital part of the world outside of school.

William E. Turner is a school principal in the Rye Public Schools, Rye, New York.